

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

England, Clergy

CLERGY

R

OF THE

ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

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REFLECTIONS

OF THE

CLERGY



ADVERTISEMENT.

IT may be useful to premise a few observations on the nature and design of the following Reflections.

To the serious and conscientious part of the Clergy, the writer looks for approbation ; nor is he fearful of censure, from any candid or liberal mind, even among the less serious.

To the Laity he observes, that it is equally remote from his desire to lower religious worth, wherever it is found, as it is to exalt it on an improper basis. This observation will hardly seem impertinent, while many confessedly think it marvellous, that “any good thing” should arise out of a splendid establishment : yet, while the names of a BARROW,

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of a TILLOTSON, of a SHERLOCK, of an ATTERBURY, are remembered with a grateful acknowledgment of their past labors; while, in more modern days, the names of a SECKER, of a LOWTH, of a PORTEUS, of a PALEY, are recognized, will this wonder cease. These, however, it may be urged, are but the splendid talents of men who were, and are, doomed to shine in their day; and, after all, the "*cui bono?*" may be asked, when are reviewed the expence, the parade, the independency of our religious establishment.

Should the writer allow that evils *do* exist under our religious establishment, he would allow only what is common to every work of man, and might, notwithstanding, claim the privilege to doubt whether they necessarily flowed from it. Human nature is never perfect, and imperfections will be found even among the Clergy. To notice partial defects, and to deny the
general

general result, is surely unworthy every candid or liberal mind, and will not be found the character of these Reflections.

When compared with other religious systems, the establishment of the Church of England, will not, perhaps, be thought to rank among the most corrupt; and, on the whole, it might fairly be asked, whether it does not well answer all the purposes which any religious establishment or system can be intended to answer.

This, indeed, is the main question, and shall be first considered, in a few general reflections. The manners of the Clergy, who, under the sanction of that establishment, can be suspended from their functions only with great difficulty, will then be freely canvassed; —the laws of candor will not be violated; nor will the writer once disgrace his Reflections by the pitiful complaints of the sour or visionary moralist.

ERRATUM.

Page 34, Line 3, *for ninth, read nine-tenths.*

REFLECTIONS,

&c. &c.

*General Reflections—Importance and Policy of such a
Body as the Clergy is in England.*

THE most popular arguments against our ecclesiastical establishment arise from the inequality of preferment, and the inducement thence held out to a certain class to slumber in gay ease, and splendid indifference to their sacred callings; while another class, on whom has fallen the more laborious offices, receives only the scantiest pittance, sufficient barely to procure the ordinary necessaries of existence.

Unlike their divine Master, who wandered about, not knowing where he might lay his head, the pampered pluralist, or the haughty dignitary, it is said, rolls in his chariot, regardless of his tattered brother's distresses. Mental inability, it is further insisted on, is often crowned with those laurels which should be the reward only of

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brilliant talents and diligent exertion; while merit is disregarded, and ability concealed under the cowl of poverty. The rich dignitary, unblest with talents, and unknown in the list of *Academic Honorati*, is obtruded into public notice; while some paltry fellowship, or some more paltry curacy, is the sole reward of genuine merit, and faithful application.

These are evils asserted, and they are too, it is not to be dissembled, *existing* evils. And, where they can, without destroying the harmony of the system under which they are found, be remedied, or, wherever they are found, not as accidental evils, but as flagrant abuses, they cannot be too loudly complained of. Let it, however, be considered first, whether the door which was open to these grievances, was not open also to many respectable ornaments, and many distinguished talents? nay, that should this door be shut, which has admitted these *obnoxious drones*, whether much good would not be excluded, and little evil avoided?

This is the true state of the case, and allows really all that can be claimed on the side of popular discontent.

Now it is to be observed, that, were all the
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livings in the country to be equalized, and all ecclesiastical emoluments consolidated into one common fund, and then dealt out to the respective laborers, the portion that would fall to each individual would, indeed, be more than falls now to many, but it would be such as would soon suffer the Church to fall into the lowest, and therefore into the worst, hands.*

Having stated the fact, the writer leaves it for the consideration of the impartial, and the

* The revenue of the Church of England is not, I think, well understood in general; at least I have met with a great many very sensible men, of all professions and ranks, who did not understand it. They have expressed a surprise, bordering on disbelief, when I have ventured to assure them that the whole income of the Church, including bishoprics, deans and chapters, rectories, vicarages, dignities and benefices of all kinds, and even the two Universities, with their respective colleges, which being lay corporations, ought not to be taken into the account, did not amount, upon the most liberal calculation to 1,500,000*l.* a year.

Estimating the number of the clergy at ten thousand, an equal partition of this revenue would be about 150*l.* a year to each individual, a sum not much to be envied him.

Apothecaries and attornies, in very moderate practice, make as much by their respective professions; without having been at the same expences with the Clergy in their educations, and without being, like them, prohibited by the laws of their country, from bettering their circumstances.

Bishop of LLANDAFF'S Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, printed in 1783.

reflecting *few*, and does not consider himself bound to anticipate every objection that might be urged against it. View our religious establishment then, as it really is—as possessing ample revenues, which might, indeed, afford a more equable subsistence to all engaged in the important concern of propagating the Gospel of Christ; but, as distributing this revenue, to one in a portion enabling him to vie in ease and luxury with our honorable men; to another, in a portion hardly superior to the lowest mechanic; as placing one immediately on the seat of honor, and leaving another to struggle against the reproaches which poverty must always endure. Do we then, from such a distribution, discover no good that can arise to our religious establishment? Do we, amid the objected darkness, discover no faint ray of light? And do we pronounce all to be barren and unfruitful? Are the encouragements which our establishment holds out, to men of acknowledged talents, of honorable families, and of public reputation, to enlist under its banners, and to become the public depositaries of religious instruction—Are these nothing?—The conclusion is inevitable—The honors, the emoluments, the glorious independency of our Church, operates

operates on many to take Orders, and to become the public supporters of religion, who would, otherwise, have turned their attentions to the army, to the law, or have flumbered their lives away on their own private patrimony.

Nor is this, the view of many, probably, in taking Orders, so objectionable as, in the simple abstract, it may be considered. Human nature has not yet arrived to that degree of perfection, but interest will, in a great degree, be the leading stimulus of action. Whatever good is observable, is, in truth, most commonly effected by secondary means: and, after all that may be said in praise of a public and disinterested spirit, though, for the honor of human nature, it may be supposed frequently to exist in individuals; still can the respectability of no system, intended for the public good, long exist, without attaching honors and emoluments on its side.

It does not follow, since many have entered into the Church, because honors and emoluments are in it, that this was *solely* their leading motive, or that they really had themselves very sanguine ideas of succeeding to those honors or emoluments:—but perceiving the general respectability

bility of the body thence arising, they could anticipate their future days, with a consciousness, that, whatever their success or failure might be, they would not condemn their early choice ; and that they would ever find, in companions embarked in the same undertaking with themselves, manners gentlemenly, sentiments liberal, and connections honorable.

Few enter the Church without some prospect of preferment ; but many quit the Church, and this uncertain scene, without obtaining preferment. Many, however, with whatever motives, do enter the Church ; and, with very few exceptions, are found, in after life, fit companions for men of rank, and of letters.

The clergy may be asserted, and without much fear of opposition, to have been, in all ages, the depositaries of learning, and the protectors of science. Yet, were the revenues of the Church equalized, or, were the present respectability of the Clergy, as a body, but slightly shaken, in whatever way—with the inducement to take Orders, would soon retire from the body of the Clergy much family support, and scarcely would be found, much brilliancy of talent.

talent.* These would soon be directed in another course. Man never likes to associate himself with a body, his inferiors in manners, connection, or fortune. In every body of men, how-

* Dr. BENTLEY has so well considered this subject in a well known passage in his *Phileleutheros Lipsiensis*, that the whole of it deserves notice:

“ As for the cheapness [of the priesthood] that appeared
 “ lately in one of your parliaments; when the accounts exhibited shewed, that six thousand of your Clergy, the greater
 “ part of your whole number, had at a middle rate one with
 “ another not 50l. a year. A poor emolument for so long,
 “ so laborious, so expensive an education, as must qualify
 “ him for Holy Orders. While I resided at *Oxford*, and saw
 “ such a conflux of youth to their annual admissions; I have
 “ often studied and admired, why their parents would, under
 “ such mean encouragements, design their sons for the
 “ Church, and those the most towardly, and capable, and select
 “ geniuses among their children; who must needs have
 “ emerged in a secular life. I congratulated indeed the felicity
 “ of your establishment, which attracted the choice youth
 “ of your nation for so very low pay: but my wonder was
 “ at the parents, who generally have interest, maintenance,
 “ and wealth, the first thing in their view: till at last one of
 “ your state lotteries ceased my astonishment. For as in that,
 “ a few glittering prizes of 1000, 5000, and 10,000 pounds,
 “ among an infinity of blanks, drew troops of adventurers,
 “ who, if the whole fund had been equally ticketted, would
 “ never have come in: so a few shining dignities in your
 “ Church, prebends, deaneries, bishopricks, are the *pious*
 “ *fraud* that induces and decoys the parents, to risk their
 “ children's fortune in it. Every one hopes his own will
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however, there always will be a distinction of individuals: and, in so numerous a body as the Clergy is, every distinction may be expected; but, from those emoluments, and those honors, which the wisest policy hath established, as inducements to the most exalted rank, and the most splendid abilities, every Clergyman may be, to the world, a man of fortune, and every Clergyman is supposed a man of letters.

AS to the importance and policy of such a body in the community as the Clergy is, little surely need be urged. Considered as men, from whom some test of learning is required, before they receive their commissions as public instructors, and as possessing the advantage of unin-

“get some prize in the church, and never reflects on the
 “thousands of blanks in poor country livings. And if a
 “foreigner may tell you his mind from what he sees at home;
 “it is this part of your Establishment that makes your Clergy
 “excel ours. Do but once level all your preferments, and
 “you will soon be as level in your learning. For instead of
 “the flower of the English youth, you will have only the
 “refuse sent to your academies; and those too cramped and
 “crippled in their studies for want of aim and emulation, so
 “that if your free thinkers had any politics, instead of sup-
 “pressing your whole order, they should make you all alike.”

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interrupted leisure, with a sufficient foundation for reflection, much may be expected from them, and much, in fact, are we indebted to their labors.

Learning, time, and discretion, are all really requisite, in a very eminent degree, to combat, with success, the many objections so variously urged against the common faith. That the Clergy have hitherto done this, with success, their writings, now extant, will be a lasting memorial ; and, even in the present day, in addition to those mentioned in the advertisement, there lives a WATSON, a HORSLEY, a RENNELL, a GISBORNE, a GORDON, with many others of inferior, though not of less useful, note. From these the true faith is ever, as occasion offers, receiving some new support, or the ties of morality are deriving additional sanctions.

These are the public benefits arising from an order of men peculiarly consecrated to the cause of religion ; but it is in the more private exercises of their function, that the Clergy appear to be the prime supporters of sound learning and religious education. Dispersed over the whole kingdom, as lecturers and public guardians of morals, in their respective districts, they cannot fail to be of service in pre-
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serving the harmony of society. It should seem, indeed, as though, sometimes, the misconduct of some of these public professors would tend to produce discredit upon the very profession of religion ; but, so wisely is the love and estimation of good order and integrity of behaviour, implanted in the breast of the people, that, where these corruptions do exist in that sacred body, the man is doubly blamed for the odium he risks on his order. It would seem as though the injuries sustained by the general cause, were amply revenged on individual transgression ; and this is one proof, at least, of the prevailing idea, concerning the respectability of the order.

With the assistance of the country magistrates, of a few people of rank, and of the principal yeomen, the Clergy would form a powerful phalanx around virtue, good order, and religion. Would the nobleman or the squire appear regularly, once a week, in the common temple ; would the magistrate, in his capacity, lose no opportunity to enforce the public sanctions of religion ; would the farmer and the yeoman attend, but a little, to the morals of their laborers, and, by their own example, shew that they are not indifferent to the cause of public decorum,

rum, by a diligent and conscientious discharge of their duties every Sunday, at least ; the friendly visitations of the parish priest would cease to be deemed impertinent, and his parochial endeavors, thus sanctioned, would soon produce a very amiable reformation in the manners of society.

This is an argument in favor of the Clergy, which will be easily understood even by those who do not admit the divine source of their commission. It is not intended, as such, here to be insisted upon : but, as the importance and policy of such a body as the Clergy was asserted, it was thought an argument of force, among some, sufficient not to be altogether omitted.

The importance and policy then of the Clergy, not only in a religious, but in a political view, is evident beyond question. This it was thought proper to assert, lest, as the following reflections will descant pretty freely upon the manners of the Clergy, the writer should unluckily be deemed, which he would be sorry for a moment to be, the calumniator of a body so sacred, so respectable, and so important.*

Having

* I have long considered the Clergy who are dispersed through the kingdom, as a little leaven, preserving from extreme

Having thus approached the subject, he may now proceed in the design without fear, it is hoped, of incurring censure from any. He bears in mind that the Clergy are but men, and he knows what allowance their infirmities claim. His sole object is, if possible, to do some good. Although he laments that he is not himself the most upright Christian, he has, he is confident, most sincerely at heart, whatever has in it any thing either of praise or of good report. And if any of the hints which may be dropped, shall happily cause *one* Clergyman to be more attentive to the sacredness of his charge, the writer will only be discharging a debt due from him to a body from whom he has himself received much instruction; whose commission, as the lawful ambassadors of Heaven's first laws, he acknowledges, and whose exhortations he hopes yet to regard with a more pious obedience.

treme corruption, the whole mass; and the great kindness and respect, with which the whole order is treated by the best and most enlightened part of the laity, is a proof that they consider them in the same light.

Bishop of LLANDAFF's Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, printed in 1783.

Reflections on the dignified, largely beneficed, and unofficiating Clergy.

THE dignified, the largely beneficed, and the unofficiating Clergy, will be considered together; not that all who are dignified and largely beneficed are unofficiating, but many are so, over a considerable part, at least, of their charge, where their functions are substituted.

To begin with the Bishops, who are the first in point of dignity, and without whom there could not be a Clergy at all, the origin of their order is to be traced immediately from the days of the Apostles, and through every successive age, such a body has continued to the present time, in every nation in which Christianity has not been publicly denied, or most grossly corrupted.

Whoever is acquainted with the writings of the Apostles, will know that the power of ordaining and commissioning to preach the Gospel, was expressly and exclusively vested in the Bishops; and whoever has been at the trouble to look into the books of the Apostolical Fathers,

thers, who immediately succeeded the Apostles, need not be informed how steadily it was insisted on, that “ nothing should be done in the “ Church without the Bishop.” (St. Clement.)

In after times the authority of this order became partly denied, and partly forgotten; and though their utility was clearly manifest, as the divine HOOKER hath well observed, yet have they ever been the subject of sport and malignity, not only among the scornful and prophane, but even among the more serious and the better disposed. Notwithstanding, however, all the clamor that has, at a variety of times, and by different parties, been raised against the authority and the name of a Bishop, such an order of Clergy does exist, and never did it exist with more respectable splendor, than at this day it does in the Church of England.

Without therefore diving deeper into its original, and without being at the pains, certainly not necessary, to anticipate every objection which may be produced against the Bishops—the writer’s business is simply to reflect on their manners, as they now exist, in conjunction with many other divines of opulence and dignity,

as Deans, Canons, Prebendaries, Archdeacons, and others.

And first, can the writer approach a body of an origin, indeed, so divine, of characters so sacred, and of functions so important, without lamenting that there is a lukewarmness in their whole manners, and an apparent indifference to the business of their Divine Master, of whom they are the immediate vicegerents? Friendly as he professes himself to their body, and admitting, as he does, their authority, can he but lament that they should give a handle to the scornful and the sinful?

Of them, at least, it might surely be expected that "God should be in all their thoughts," and that their presence would awe to silence, and abash the intemperate sallies of the prophane.—But, alas! even here is to be bewailed the infirmities of human nature, which, in characters so sacred, thus injure the cause which they should ever be most zealous to defend. Whoever has been at the tables of our Bishops, of our Deans, and of our Prebendaries, has found things to go on pretty nearly the same at them, as it has done at the tables of our Dukes, of our Earls, of our Marquisses, and of our Barons.

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And yet the manners of high life are confessedly, at the present day, not the most favorable to virtue or religion. These things then, among our honorable men, who are immediately engaged in the service of a jealous God, who denies any competitor among men, whose business it is to send forth other laborers also into the same service, ought not to be. Customs that may be allowable, and even, perhaps, innocent in a layman, are often injurious, and therefore not allowable or innocent in such characters as these. Whether they are, or are not, looked up to as patterns for all men, and more particularly for the inferiors of their own body, they certainly are bound to be such. They are expressly called (the Bishops) our "Right Reverend Fathers in God," fathers, as appointing to us tutors and instructors in things pertaining to God; fathers, or protectors of Christianity, as examining the test by which others think themselves qualified to teach its sublime truths; and fathers, to watch over the common faith, by which all, that are born into the world, shall receive salvation.

But do, indeed, these heavenly fathers, in common with the other dignitaries of the Church,

Church, leave the scornful no room to doubt whether they are religious with all their heart, with all their mind, and with all their strength? Are they, in all their actions, attentive to promote the honor and glory of their Master? Are they *unequivocally* so, and do they never afford an evil example to spectators, by a neglect of the public worship of God? Are their carriages never seen unnecessarily to travel on the Lord's day? Or, knowing as they do, the force of example, do they strain every nerve in their power that it shall never give offence; or, even supposing innocently, that it shall yet, in no case, afford a sanction to perpetuate a breach of the *slightest* order?

Nor let it be thought that this is straining too far the point of example. Let it be considered whom it concerns, and its operation then would sanction even a double severity; it concerns men who are deputed the public guardians of morals and religion, and who really have a very observable influence over the manners of society at large.

The dignitaries of the Church are, in general, men past the hey-day of youth, whose passions

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are subdued by time, and whose reason should be matured by reflection. If they are fathers of families, and many of them are, this duty of example presses still stronger upon them. If they have arrived to a mature age, they have not temptations present to incline them from the paths of duty. In short, they are not only the teachers of religion themselves, but they are they whose business it is to watch over, and to appoint teachers when they shall have ceased to be; and, if the fountain head be corrupt, what may be expected of the streams? they will be choked with weeds as they flow along in a strange current, and instead of wheat, shall tares spring up, and thorns and briers choke the harvest of the Gospel.

Another duty, most highly incumbent on the dignified Clergy is charity—charity, as it consists in the bestowing of alms. The dignitaries of the Church are not to be informed of the eleemosynary gifts which originally flowed to the poor from their revenues, when ecclesiastical potentates were used to give public audience to all indigent people in the halls of their palaces, and to relieve each according to their various necessities,

necessities, or the motions of their own goodness. And though to be charitable, in the same way, now, and to the same degree, were not practicable, yet much might be done, that is left undone.

Neither, indeed, do the necessities, nor the means of such largesses now exist, as did in the days of princely revenues among the ecclesiastics. Hospitals for the poor were not then established, and one cardinal or abbot engrossed a territory of wealth, hardly, at this day, possessed by our whole body of clergy. Yet is it grievous, to any liberal mind, to witness the complaints which are poured out, so plentifully, against those in the Church, to whom much has been intrusted. These complaints, indeed, are not all, or most of them, well founded; for the Clergy, as a body, are unquestionably charitably disposed; and neither want of candor, nor of beneficence, where blest with the power, are among their reigning vices. It must nevertheless be observed, that our dignitaries do not take that active part in works of charity which might be expected of them. As lights set up in darkness, and in an age disposed to murmur fre-

quently without a cause, it were worthy their more serious attention, how much their character suffers even from the slightest shade of remissness in this duty. At a time when many are inclined to traduce, and few to defend them, they should neglect no opportunity to stem the torrent of popular disapprobation. Every where, within their own circles, some poor should rehearse their praises, and every public charity should, where the object is laudable, be supported by some dignified Reverends at its head.

The dearth of such active benevolence as this is often urged in dispraise of our higher Clergy; for many more can know readily what were desirable to be done, than reflect that the means may be wanting, where the will really exists;—and if the families of the dignified Clergymen, should be regarded when death has taken them, more than is generally supposed will appear not to have enjoyed too much of the good things of this world.

Few of the Clergy arrive to any considerable preferment, before life has considerably worn away; and when a family is to be supported in
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a rank suitable to their own dignity. The sum of life which remains is but little, and the orphan family of the priest, long reviled as insensible to another's woes, can often declare how *his* largesses were more than proportionate to his revenue.*

This should be considered before censure be passed indiscriminately upon the heads of a body so sacred. However, there are very few who might not, in their respective circles, do much good at a very small expence; and thus acquire a reputation, very essential to those, whose peculiar business of instruction cannot well be otherwise effected with any success.

If charity be, and it will hardly be disputed to be, among our most amiable duties, it should seem to claim the first attention of those among the Clergy, who are supposed, at least, to possess the amplest means of exercising it; and, even though this supposition should be some-

* We see in the course of every century, a great many ample fortunes accumulated, and obscure families enobled, by the profession of the law, by the army, by the navy, and by commerce; but it is a rare thing indeed to see a Churchman, lifting his posterity above the common level, either in rank or fortune.

Bishop of LLANDAFF'S Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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times false, still are they bound, if by abridging somewhat in their ordinary luxuries, not altogether to deceive its expectations. As the most public patrons of all that is amiable, it can hardly be strongly enough insisted on, that, from them, whatever falls little short of perfection, injures their whole body, and operates injuriously on the manners of society; since all men are more willing to be deceived into any negligence or omission by the authority of a great example, than to be at much pains themselves in steadily pursuing what conscience dictates to be done.

There is yet another most essential point, concerning which the manners of the higher Clergy, would not, perhaps, endure the severest examination. Christianity is every where represented as a race, as a state of warfare, as a pilgrimage of much trial and difficulty; figures which suggest a necessity of the most diligent caution, and which most forcibly inculcate, that our salvation is to be worked out with fear and trembling.

How then do the lives of the higher orders of the Clergy correspond with this description? Do *they* seem really sensible of the critical situation

ation in which they profess all mankind to stand? Or, taking example from them, will the inferior Clergy, or the people at large, become much more attentive to the business of their common salvation? Do, in short, our Bishops, our Canons, our Deans, our Prebendaries, our Archdeacons, do these “pray without ceasing?”—Or do they decidedly shew, in their families, whose cause they have espoused, and in whose immediate service they are enlisted?

The duty of domestic prayer, which would tend, beyond all other means, to preserve in us a lasting sense of our own dependance, has, indeed, been long neglected; nor is it to be dissembled, 'tis not from the more exalted ranks of the Clergy, that the prevailing influence of a better example might be drawn.

This is not a time to temporize—a cloud seems suspended over the more amiable and effective duties of Christianity; and it should seem as though the days of heathen indifference were again reviving. It might have been expected that the Clergy in general, but more particularly that they who rule the grand body, would have been found a people zealous of good works, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

generation. Since, however, it is not to them an example is to be looked for, from them may it yet be hoped will spring the first fruits of the desired reformation. The authority of a great example is always efficacious in its own department; and if the prime ministers of religion were, indeed, inflamed by an ardent and active piety, their whole body would be more animated with the pure flame of habitual devotion. Every morning and evening their household should be assembled, and with the reverend master at its head, declare to the world that their unceasing desire is to serve "the living God."

Such a measure, steadily pursued among the higher Clergy, would, there can be no hesitation to state, do more to conciliate the declining affections of the people, and to improve the conduct of their whole body, than all their residentiary appearances in cathedrals and colleges, and than all the occasional charges delivered in apostolical authority, at the visitations of Bishops and Archdeacons.

The Bishops have, indeed, officially, daily prayers in their palaces—It is the failure of *domestic prayer* among the higher Clergy at large, which is the subject of complaint. It is a
duty

duty incumbent on all the Clergy, but it is a duty that has been long neglected by the Clergy; and it is from men who have made some progress in years, and whose dignified stations give them a command of influence, that the desired good must first flow—The writer therefore thought proper to say thus much in his reflections upon the higher Clergy, supposing they might be, with little trouble, the regulators of the whole body: and as their whole body is, so, in a great measure, will be the whole body of the laity. In the common course of things, it is supposed, and wisely too supposed, that the laity should take their manners from the Clergy, and that the Clergy should not insensibly slide into every fashionable vanity, or be eager to adopt the thoughtless manners of the age.

Reflections on the beneficed and officiating Clergy.

A VERY useful part of the Clergy comes next to be considered. Some will not scruple, perhaps, to call it, the most respectable part. This is not the opinion of the writer. From the Archbishop, down to the lowest Curate, an harmonious whole is formed, respectable in its various connections, influencing alike all ranks and degrees, and encircling every possible interest that can obtain in society.

If such a body as this, possessed of such means—of learning, of leisure, of connection, of wealth, fail to do some good, the error cannot be in its polity, but will be found in its habits. Commissioned and qualified to do much good, it might be hoped, at least, that they would do but little evil.

The prime essential in which the parish priest seems to fail, is, in securing the harmony of his parishioners. Unpossessed of this, all his labors must be barren; and though he should preach with the tongue of an angel, yet would his admonitions

monitions be disregarded, and his authority contemned.

How then, may it be asked, are the Clergy esteemed by the body of the people? Are they generally revered in their respective parishes, as conscientious pastors, who have a flock they feed with all diligence? Do they, by taking part in the petty disputes of their parish, necessarily estrange from their affections, *some* of their parishioners? Are they litigious in collecting their dues, or do they take all possible pains, by mildness and gentleness of manners, to demonstrate the equity of their claims?

The truth is, both are to blame; the Clergy and their parishioners. The Clergy from insisting on too much, often receive too little, respect; and the parishioner, who seldom is willing, and often less able, to trace the beautiful effects of an uninterrupted harmony between a pastor and his flock, *he* too readily imbibes the prevailing uncandid spirit of the times—*he* judges with severity on the most trifling occasions, and perpetuates a cold, unsocial distance of conduct, which leaves to the Clergyman little room for the more active and kind exertions of a parochial father.

Tythes, also, a fruitful source of contention,
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are at hand to widen the breach. In vain would the farmer be reminded that his agreement was for a ninth only of the produce. Happy it were for the Clergy, could a substitute be found for tythes, in every respect unexceptionable; but this the wisest calculators have agreed is not possible.

It is worthy of remark, that tythes, the whole odium of which most commonly rests on the Clergy, are principally possessed by the laity. The revenues of the church, from this circumstance, it is true, derive their best strength—yet it seems hardly equitable, even allowing that tythes are, indeed, of unjust and oppressive principle, that the Clergy alone should suffer under an imputation, a very small share of which really applies to them.

It is, indeed, to be lamented, that the Clergy are frequently very injudicious in their method of collecting their dues. Instead of endeavouring to conciliate the minds of the landholders, an agent obnoxious to them, is, in the first instance, employed; and how can it be wondered at if men thus hastily treated as rogues, should, sometimes, in revenge, give a reality to the suspicion? Man never likes to be the ob-
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ject of suspicion ; and whenever he is, the penalty usually recoils on the suspecting party.

That the Clergy often are the dupes of a low pitiful cunning, is not denied ; but they are, surely, themselves too, very reprehensible. Much might be done by management ; and, by a little good understanding, these prevailing differences among them and their parishioners, might, in great measure, be obviated—As ambassadors of Heaven, who have a law to proclaim, and as public teachers, whose prime object ought to be instruction, they should know, and they should consider, how much depends on their own personal esteem among their parishioners. If they really believe, as they often profess they do from the pulpit, that the rewards of goodness are chiefly distributable in another world, they would readily think no sacrifice hardly too great to effect so desirable a purpose. Their own superior education should teach them to look with a more favorable eye on the low, pitiful cunning of those they may have sometimes to deal with ; and, if it did so, there can be little doubt but the consequence would be favorable. Such sacrifices, and such concessions, moderated with discretion, and flowing from a good heart, were

truly respectable, truly worthy of a parish priest, and would, before all other means, facilitate a doctrine which breathes among men the purest harmony, and which inculcates, as the first of all lessons, a kind, social, and accomodating frame of mind.

However lightly regarded the Clergy may seem to be in their parishes, they are, in fact, generally looked up to for an example, and, perhaps, there are but few situations, removed from the immediate scene of temptation, where it will not be found, that, as the family of the Clergyman is, so is the religious temper of the parish. In this view, then, it is of the dearest consequence to every thing that is sacred, that the parochial Clergy should be good governors of their own families. As such, many will be found; but, alas! there are many, too, who do operate with contaminating influence over the whole circle of their immediate connection—the slightest shade in them is sufficient to discolor the fountain of all excellence; and if they have only a few foibles, and many virtues, more can proclaim their errors, than will acknowledge their perfections.

The parochial Clergy are as beacons for their
parishioners

parishioners to steer by, in the stormy sea of life ; and if but one false reflection is discovered, the whole light is pronounced as darkness. Yet, the family of the Rector, or Vicar, is not always, is not usually, the best regulated in the parish. Early habits are not easily resisted ; and the early habits of the Clergy, acquired by a system of education, in which active morals are but little considered, and less attended to, lay not the most favorable foundation for the sacredness of their future functions. Long accustomed to a free mode of life, and enemies, in general, to all that has the appearance of form, they are really little conscious when their manners *do* give offence ; and often, innocently enough it may be, the little indecorums of their families are pleaded in excuse of still greater excesses. Surely, the serious and conscientious Clergyman, would he bestow on this consideration, which he will lament is too true, that attention its importance requires, he would see, in himself, at least, the necessity of abstaining sometimes from things even lawful : like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, he would become “ all things to all men, that he might save some.” Viewing himself, as he is, indeed, the grand reformer of manners,

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he would look to the most secret springs of his conduct, and, in the whole œconomy of his family, would “abstain from all appearance of evil.”

It were tiresome to descend to particulars, and might seem pitiful, or among others, might be instanced as the source of much evil, the absence of the Clergymen’s servants sometimes from public worship. The Clergy are not censured as being more culpable in this respect than their neighbours ; they are allowed to be, as indeed they well ought, to be commonly less so : but in them the lightest stain is observable ; and, while the cook of *our parson* remains at home only to dress the Sunday’s dinner, every farmer’s John will remain in the stable to curry the horses. Very few cases, surely, there are, in which the dinner at the parsonage might not, once a week, be served, without detaining any one servant from the public duty of prayers and thanksgiving.

No other particular shall be instanced in which, thus undesignedly, the conduct of the parson, or of his domestics, may be followed by a train of evils : this one will suggest a variety of reflections to every sensible mind, if it is only
serious

serious and conscientious ; and few, whatever the weaknesses of poor human nature may seem to urge to the contrary, are not so among the parochial Clergy. More, too, would be tiresome, and might seem invidious. Besides, the object of these reflections is not to complain, simply, but to insinuate, if, haply, by any means, into the mind of the well-disposed Clergy, a train of much caution, and great delicacy, respecting those indifferent customs which may possibly act as crimes upon society. There are, says LAVATER, “ many practices innocent in themselves, which operate as crimes upon society — Fly,” says the same, “ him who can commit them.” The writer addresses himself to the Clergy—they will understand him : “ If doing your duty in one way, which might as well be done in another, give offence ; do it so no more.”

As yet the writer fears little to have incurred the disapprobation of any of the Clergy : he has rather advised, or pitied, than censured them. He wishes not to give offence ; but, where there is much to blame, he can no longer remain their advocate.

In the sermons, in the modern sermons, it is meant, of the Clergy of the established church, is to be traced the fruitful source of those schisms which are amongst us ; and the unity of the church, every parish almost can witness the truth of the assertion, is seldom destroyed, but there flows into the chasm that rancorous spirit, which, under the fair pretence of religious zeal, strikes deep at the root of every Christian virtue.

If the abstracted and metaphysical doctrines of moral philosophy, which now too frequently supply food for our pulpits, is to continue ; if the name of a Redeemer is to be studiously avoided ; if the merits of his sacrifice are never, or but seldom, in compliance with prejudice, as is sometimes affected, to be insisted on ; if the peculiar doctrines of Christianity are no more heard in our churches,—where is the wonder that the Tabernacle is frequented, and that the Church is deserted ? Such is the fact, and such is the consequence.

Could a TILLOTSON, a BARROW, a PEARSON, could an HOOKER, or a NELSON, for they were laymen, could any one of these be introduced into our churches, and hear what is called the
sermon,

fermon, unpreceded by those prayers which our excellent liturgy require *yet* to be used, would he not need to be reminded that he was *then* in a congregation *professing* Christianity? Shade of these excellent persons, arise! and let the pure doctrines of Christ once more be taught freely from our pulpits. Let none be alarmed: the writer is not a Methodist; and he laments that there should be a sect so called while the Church of England has a name in being. But he knows, he flatters himself he does, what Christianity is; and he knows that, in most of our churches, the ignorant cannot learn *what* it is, save in the gleamings which they may collect from that form of sound words directed in them to be used.

It is not necessary to be always canting or whining on the name of Christ, or to familiarize our minds to hardiness in the bloody scene of our sacrificial salvation; but it might be expected, that they who had received a commission to preach the Gospel, would teach what the Gospel is.

The Gospel is not a scheme which ever lowers the sanctions of morality; it exalts every latent spark of goodness to its due perfection; and was introduced, not to destroy the law and the

prophets, but to fulfil them. Yet, while moral essays are delivered as sermons, the law, indeed, is not destroyed, but the gospel is impeded.

Moral discourses are very good, certainly, in their way ; and now that Christianity is established in almost all nations, should sometimes be delivered from the pulpit : but, alas ! into how many churches may the uneducated and poor disciple of a poorer master, enter from Sunday to Sunday, till the year is expired, and again, from Sunday to Sunday, till another year is expired, and then return home, except for the prayers and lessons, just as good a Christian, as though he had been hearing the morals of Seneca, or the offices of Cicero.

Some respectable writers of the present day have dared to notice this sad violation of their commission amongst our established protectors of religion, and they seem, from the pleasing strains lately heard to flow from some pulpits, to have noticed it with effect. Indeed, the Clergy are not wanting in ability, but they have slidden, insensibly, into a lukewarmness concerning the atoning merits of a Redeemer, which too fatally characterizes the day.

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It was from the fanatical excesses of the Puritans, that the Clergy of the established church first abated in the outward expressions of their zeal for the gospel of their Saviour. Extremes are the common forerunners of pitiful *means*. Had the Clergy, when the fanaticism of the Puritans most prevailed, maintained just that post they were surprized in, the intolerant zeal of their enemies would not have prevailed, and WHITFIELD and WESLEY would, in after times, have wanted followers.

That post, it is not now too late for them to regain ; much depends on their possessing it, and, as the writer does not believe they ever resigned it through any disinterest or indifference to the cause itself, but insensibly erred only in the means of supporting it, he has the most sanguine hopes that the CHURCH OF ENGLAND will yet be the CHURCH OF CHRIST.

What was said before concerning domestic prayer, will apply here, with this additional observation, that, as there are few serious or respectable families who do not visit their Clergyman, the good example of such a practice would
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be introduced into some of the more serious families ; and, when all the parishes in the kingdom are taken into consideration, in which there is a resident Clergyman, great would appear the sum of practical piety hence necessarily arising. That the parochial Clergy are deficient in this respect, it is sufficient to have hinted. They are, it is believed, generally intent upon doing good ; and if they can be persuaded only to consider the reputation which would accrue to their whole body, and the good to society, their prayers would not then be confined to their churches.

It may be expected that something should be added here concerning the visitation of the sick, and praying by them ; but as this is a duty purely ministerial, the Clergy can be the only judges of its expediency. Besides, so far as the writer has been able to observe, this is not among their neglected duties. What the Clergy seem principally reprehensible for, is, not the open contempt of important, or neglect of the kinder, duties of their profession, but the having assumed, in compliance with a loose age, that fashionable pliancy of manners, which leaves the serious little opportunity

nity to know, whether they are indeed serious in the cause they have embarked in. Hence has arisen, unmeritedly, perhaps, a general sneer upon the whole body.

Reflections on the laborious Clergy.

THE class of the Clergy, last to be considered, is frequently, indeed, pitied; but, because, like their divine Master, their lot is humble, they are frequently too the sport of the vulgar and the prophane.

The laborious and necessitous Curates, dispersed over the whole kingdom, form a body of Clergy more actively useful, certainly, than either of those just considered; and, insignificant as they may appear in the scale of that respectability which wealth will always acquire, it is they who form the opinion which *will* be maintained of the whole body.

If the poverty of the Curates necessarily plunge them into many difficulties, these will be observed, and our whole ecclesiastical polity will be condemned. In proportion as they are correct or dissipated in their manners, will every order of Priests be esteemed or despised. Nor is this difficult to be accounted for:—the Curates, in fact, are the only order of Clergy known intimately to the body of the people; the occasion-
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al residences of Canons; Deans, and Prebendaries, of Rectors and Vicars, commonly leave no very familiar trace of acquaintance; but a residentiary Curate, if he do his duty consistently, is known alike, and familiarly known, to every family in his parish.

It is not the object of these Reflections to inquire why this laborious part of the Clergy should be so poorly remunerated; it is sufficient to have observed, that such a body does, in fact, exist; and, if any of the few following observations should tend to strengthen among them that sacred caution, so indispensibly necessary for the support of the character they have assumed, the object of the writer would be most pleasingly satisfied.

If it is necessary that beneficed Clergymen, who are resident on their livings, should be in good neighbourhood with their parishioners; it is for their own comfort, if that only be considered, doubly necessary that Curates should be so. But are not these often indiscreet in their manners, and do they not sometimes violate, with their parishioners, those little obligations which intended kindnesses always merit?

The Curate, on his first entering into a strange parish, usually receives some little testimonies of
future

future kindness from his parishioners ; he is called upon, and he receives invitations ; and usually, so far as these civilities go, where they are not continued, the fault lies in the Clergy.

But the writer has had to observe, and, with much regret, has observed, that, in very many cases, these civilities are most scandalously abused. Received freely at the table of the squire, or the farmer, the Curate surely should, if it may be allowed once to use an homely phrase, “ take things as “ he finds them :” yet, a want of candor sometimes returns on the obligation, and a breach of honor proclaims some causeless disgust into the ears of the next family ; that family joins in the idle tale, and briskly circulates another to it. At length, thus improved, it returns to the family whence it originally sprung, and “ our minister” stands condemned as the author. This is not honorable—This is not becoming a teacher of Christ. However the foul breath of slander, or the pitiful sneer of detraction, may enliven some circles, they ought not to stain that purity, that candor, that liberality, that charity, which never should be absent from a minister of the most *kind* religion ; and, professing themselves gentlemen,

men, as all Clergymen do, this is one of the most flagrant violations possible of that profession.

If there is any one Christian virtue, which the Clergy ought more particularly to insist upon, it is, perhaps, that of a kind, social, unslanderous disposition; but, if they are found the first to transgress, what good can be expected from their preaching?

It is a duty too which every Clergyman owes to his body, to return every kindness with civility: for supposing the customary civilities, any individual may receive, to be perfectly indifferent to him, they may not be so to his successor; and, besides, the general rule should be preserved.

But, if this argument have no weight, it is hoped, the meanness of the custom itself will speak to its own confusion. To be received hospitably into a house, whatever house it may be, and then to become the pitiful tale-bearer from it, is a custom so mean, so disgraceful, to every one who would be thought a gentleman, or a man of honor, so ungrateful, and so injurious to every kind principle, that it is dismissed, as unworthy even to be hinted at in a body so amply

ly blessed with the means, at least, of cultivating, on every occasion, the most liberal judgment.

Another snare besets the laborious Clergy, which will exercise their utmost caution;—to avoid, on the one hand, giving offence, and, on the other, to preserve that consistency of character, which is required by their sacred engagements. With much leisure, and with little refined society at hand, the Curates are too apt to resort to public dinners, and pleasurable parties of mixed characters:—there they are frequently obliged to hear religion scoffed at, at a time when it would hardly be proper for them to stand forth its champions; and more frequently their character is insulted by the retail of some low ribaldry, dealt freely out because a Clergyman is present.

Thus the Curates, who have not commonly influence to regulate the conversation, are reduced to the most unpleasant dilemma; they must either sit silent, an unwelcome restraint, probably, upon the company, or, by taking a part, they are apt, sometimes, to betray the post incautiously, which they should ever maintain.

It were to be wished then, seriously, that the Curates would be more guarded, what mixed
society

society they resort to. Many things may be said, and many subjects may be discussed, where a Clergyman knows his company, which no sensible man would willingly utter, or be engaged in, before a mixed society of some friends, and more secret enemies. A Clergyman, who, in the festive hour, can smile, in a mixed company, at an indecent jest, or take the slightest part in any intemperate folly of the imagination, may hardly be conscious, at the moment, that he is doing more extensive harm, than all his best sermons, and all his general habits of decorum can possibly counter-balance.

A jolly parson, in fact, is not a reputable character; not reputable, because he betrays the cause he would affect to support; not reputable, because, in his own person, he degrades his whole body; not reputable, because his conduct is at habitual variance with his doctrine; not reputable, because he weakens the sanctions of decorum which he is bound to maintain, and which can be maintained in no way so effectually as by the authority of living examples; and which authority becomes thus, in himself, most fatally weakened.

Stiffness and jollity, as they are usually opposed to each other, are very, very distinct; and

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a Clergyman, to be correct, must fall under neither. But, if he must be what is called jolly, and to some it is really constitutional to be so, he should, it will be agreed, before he exercises his jollity, know well his company. It cannot be too frequently suggested how many innocent things, time and place may render highly injurious consequentially in a clergyman ; and therefore, in him, their innocency ceases. Is it not painful to be present at a rude party of farmers, or boisterous sportsmen, and there hear a Clergyman, if not taking the lead in, silently conniving at, those conversations, which can only be alluded to, in his presence, by an insult on his profession? The objected difficulty of his situation is hardly deserving an answer : so far should he be from spreading, or conniving at evil, that he is bound, at all times, on all occasions, and in all places, to do, and to promote, whatever is good ; and, if his situation is delicate, the duty he owes to society is in him, and should be, the first of all duties. What then is to be done? Are the Curates, because their situation is thus delicate, to abstain from public dinners altogether? Let it be remembered, that it is public meetings of mixed and unknown characters,

acters, composed chiefly, perhaps, of farmers, and attornies, and apothecaries, which have been objected to. It is not contended that, even from these a total abstinence is required; but, surely, it need hardly be urged, that much more caution of behaviour is necessary here, than would be in a party of gentlemen of accomplished manners, and of liberal sentiments. At any rate, they should but seldom be resorted to, and then, whenever a loose commences to the more intemperate conversation, the absence of the Clergyman can give no offence; while his presence would be the most grievous crime, because it would be a crime—against society.

All that was before said respecting the sermons of the beneficed Clergy, is applicable also to those of the Curates. They should be plain, practical, and evangelical. They should, too, be considered as their own. This it seems more particularly necessary to urge here, as it is from the Curates, in general, that the knowledge of pulpit fraud is first discovered. Some have to preach three, and many two, sermons, on a Sunday, in one parish; and, in the intimacy that often subsists, between them and some of the more respectable parishioners, this

secret

secret escapes. Unfortunately, they cannot be sure that it will be confined to the more respectable; it is heard among the servants of the more respectable; from them it creeps to the ears of the common farmer; and is, at length, as well known, throughout the parish, as that a sermon is to be preached.

The abilities of the Clergy are various, and many, who excel much in other ways, may rank very low in the art of composition. But many excellent sermons are printed, and many are handed about in manuscript. It is not meant to enter into a disinteresting inquiry, whether these may never be used in public but by the authors: but it is most strongly contended, that every clergyman must, to atchieve all the good that can be expected from preaching, be thought, at least, to preach his own. Let it not be imagined, that the writer means to favor the custom of preaching anothers sermons, provided it can be kept secret. It enters not into the inquiry; and whether the custom be, in any case, commendable, is not to be traced in these reflections.

It is more the object of the writer to observe, that many of the Clergy are much, indeed, to be censured, for thus wilfully, and unnecessarily, resigning

resigning much of their influence. Even among the best informed, the knowledge that a Clergyman is in the habit of preaching sermons, not his own, can do no good, and may do much harm; and, as it is pretty universally agreed, that such a knowledge would do harm, certainly, among the lower orders of people, it shall only be observed, that more do, indeed, come within that class, in point of understanding, than are willing to think so.

The leading motive with many, with most, to resort to church, is to hear a good sermon. It is not said that this ought to be the leading motive, but that it is so. Much of its supposed goodness, after all, will depend on the opinion entertained of the character and abilities of the preacher. All are not competent to judge what is a good sermon, and what is not; but all expect the person, who addresses them, should be in earnest; and, if they once know that his doctrine is not his own, this leading motive of frequenting the church will cease. Even though the motive is not the best, as it produces much good, it should, in defect of the operation of a superior, be preserved in its full vigor.

Although nothing has been advanced on the

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subject,

subject, whether sermons may ever, from a discreet Clergyman, be preached, which are not his own—the writer feels himself at liberty to observe, that there is a manifest advantage on the side of a Clergyman's making, and being always supposed to preach, his own. No foreign compositions can possibly be so well adapted to every time and occasion, as those which are the children of his own diligent reflection. There is too a persuasive kind of animation peculiarly adapted to, and always accompanying, the delivery of a man's own composition. This persuasive animation is now much wanted in our pulpits. From whatever cause a dry, logical style, and an unimpassioned utterance prevails in them. We are not defending the vulgar affectations, and the thundering modulations of ignorant fanatics; but in our established Churches there literally needs something to keep people awake.

By our Doctor perplexed,
 How shall we discover,
 "Watch and pray" says the text,
 Go to sleep says the sermon.*

This would not be the fact, were the habit of making sermons more common than it is; or

* Salmagundi.

were Clergymen as anxious, as the nature of the case requires, that their hearers should suppose their sermons their own.

If the Clergy are really too idle to compose a sermon, they might probably remain so without much injury to their hearers; but that they should ever, by proclaiming their indolence, or their incapacity, lose much of their authority, is most seriously to be lamented. That they have done so, who of my readers cannot bear testimony? In many churches are now preached the sermons of OGDEN, of JOHNSON, of SEED, of JORTIN; and preached they might be very safely, but for the indiscreet, and unnecessary communications, of the preacher.

If idleness, or incapacity, render plagiarism necessary in the pulpit, it should be concealed: the interest of every congregation, and of society, demand that it should; and, bearing in mind the duty every active Clergyman has to discharge, and the necessity of his always being supposed a wise man, concealed plagiarism, which would be the height of disgrace in an author, may, in the pulpit, be almost the height of imparted excellence.

It were also much to be wished, that this class

of the Clergy would be more attentive to their manner of reading. The dull, cold, and unaffected utterance of our most excellent Liturgy, should seem to betray a want of interest in the reader, which nothing short of an intimate acquaintance with, it may be, the best of characters, can possibly undeceive. Is it not a shame, sometimes, in a parish Church, to hear a Clergyman actually reading more carelessly, and worse, than a common boy would, taken out of the Sunday school? And what impression must this have on the congregation? They lose much respect they would otherwise cherish for the reader, and imagine, often falsely enough, that he reads over the prayers, as the school-boy would his task, and is glad when they are finished.

It is, indeed, in the power of few to read well; nature must favor the wish, and long and attentive habit must establish it. But it is in the power of all to avoid that careless, that tiresome, that unanimated, and that drolling manner, which disgraces the occupiers of our desks, over our Liturgy, and over that admirable storehouse of all wisdom—the Book of Psalms.

An attention to these little things in the
Clergy

Clergy would secure the respect which is ever ready to be paid to them, and would produce them fuller churches ; for, that they be respected, they must be in earnest ; and, that they be followed, there must be, as there should be, a much livelier animation in their general style and manner.

Reflections, respecting this class of the Clergy incurring debt, may seem extraneous to the subject ; but nothing is so that may suggest to them cautions, enabling them better to maintain their respectability, and better to fulfil their important engagements. Debt, which is often a personal misfortune, solely, in ordinary persons, is a general offence in a Clergyman : many more will readily discover that he is poor, than that he is wise ; and poverty is not the most favorable medium through which to convey instruction.

There are always a few vulgar minds in a parish who would willingly make poverty a crime in the parson, and ridicule in him what they would pity in his neighbour. Thus circumstanced, he loses much of the means of doing good, and necessarily becomes deficient in that external respectability which is, in some measure,
essential

essential to his very office. Every one, then, who duly considered this, would avoid, at whatever inconvenience, if not for his own, for the good of his parish, the unnecessary accumulation of debt. There are, however, thoughtless manners carried from the university to the country village, which are the fruitful parents of a crowd of evils; and which, by undermining clerical authority, destroy the strongest sanctions of personal instruction.

Possessed of little private fortune, it is not surprising that the laborious part of the Clergy should, sometimes, incur debts they cannot discharge; but, since so very much depends on their maintaining a fair character, it might be expected that prudence would not be unknown among them as it is. There is no class of people whose debts ought to claim more pity; but there is no class of people whose debts do such extensive mischief. They cut up authority, they destroy confidence, and are always the triumph of the scornful.

It is, lastly, much to be regretted, that, in characters so sacred, the silly vanity of the day should be found, which supposes an affected contempt of things serious and sacred,
marks

marks the man of spirit. This has long been the prevailing folly of the nation, and now shews itself most injuriously among the junior Clergy, who are, for the most part, the officiating Clergy.

To all who are really conscious of the proneness of man to evil, the fear of appearing "righteous over much" will appear silly enough; and, when the manners of the present day are considered, it seems somewhat surprising, to every reflecting mind, that a fear, so ill grounded, should prevail in any class of the Clergy; yet it is in fact, among the class now under consideration, the grand source of every evil. Since the time of the Puritans, and Fanatics, in Charles's time, regularity of manners, and hypocritical affectation, have been most unhappily confounded; and it has been supposed, that, as youth is the natural season of gaiety, a regular and moral young man is either an hypocrite, or destitute of spirit.

This supposition, absurd as it is in reference to the laity, it is a serious pity that any part of the Clergy should have applied to themselves; yet have they, in every class, in a different proportion, assumed it as their principle of action,
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and, unmindful of that exemplary consistency of behaviour which their profession requires of them, they have, by assimilating their manners too closely to the prevailing foibles of the day, given a sanction to the common enemy.

It needs little apology that this censure is referred to the Curates, and the laborious Clergy particularly ; for they are young in years commonly, and, therefore, most easily beguiled by any popular prejudice. They dread the charge, the most dreadful, of hypocrisy ; and are frequently known to affect a freedom of opinion, and a looseness of behaviour, which, perhaps, no temptation could plunge them into. Forgetful that they are men looked up to for an example, and that they are preachers of a doctrine which requires a sacrifice of the most favorite desires, they are little conscious how much they are weakening the general interests of religion. Unmindful that they are the servants of a Master who always illustrated his precepts by a living example, they really produce, but in a very scanty proportion, the fruits of sincerity, and give opportunity to the sensual sceptic to shelter his excesses under the

notion of all religion being a mere speculation of refined policy.

That this is the melancholy truth, look only to our younger Clergy, and how few traces of sincerity, of earnestness, or of zeal, will *their* general conduct evince! Consider what the gospel of Christ is, and how unlike will *they* seem to the ministers of his religion. Is this a corrupt and sinful generation? And, how are the lives of the younger Clergy distinguished from those of the younger laity? Are they correct, as the religion they profess teaches they should be, in thought, word, and deed? And do they “abstain from all appearance of evil?”

But this is digressing from the occasion, which is only to expose the silly, prevailing fear, among the younger Clergy, of appearing “righteous over much,”—a fear the more silly, and the more injurious in them, because they are, or ought to be, the patterns of all human excellence. Wherever they fail to be so, however, in the jollity of youth, they may avoid the reflection, they are, in a contrary example, the grand seducers of all innocence and purity of conduct. The pernicious example of one Clergyman, whatever his age may be, works an infinity of moral disorder.

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It is the shelter of every voluptuary whose passions are superior to his faith : it is the plea of every infidel against the common provision made for the means of grace, and it is the last fatal blow that can be offered to the declining interests of Messiah's Gospel.



FINIS

